Same old story? Children and young people's continued normalisation of men's violence against women

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Abstract

Globally, nationally and locally men's violence against women is an endemic social problem and an enduring human rights issue within all societies and cultures. Challenging attitudes that condone violence both at the individual and community level is a key priority in its prevention. This paper brings together findings from two separate studies based upon children and young people's understandings of men's violence against women. Both studies were located in Glasgow, Scotland, and used qualitative methods to explore children and young people's views of men's violence against women. The two studies, conducted nearly ten years apart, involved children aged 11 and 12 and young people aged 15 to 18. Despite the differences in age and the interval between them, there are remarkable similarities identified within both studies centring around children and young people's normalisation of men's violence against women.

This paper presents a discussion of three of the key themes identified from these studies: the construction of men's violence; gender roles and the naturalisation of difference; and the normalisation of men's violence. In both studies the techniques of

normalisation were employed by the participants to minimise both the seriousness of the violence and the significance of it to the victims.

The findings clearly illustrate the widespread justification of gendered violence by both boys *and* girls. Thus, while the development and implementation of domestic violence/abuse education programmes need to take into account gender differences, targeting only boys' attitudes fail to acknowledge an important component in reducing domestic violence/abuse – the internalisation of patriarchal norms by girls and women.

Introduction

Men's violence towards the women they are in an intimate relationship with is remarkably uniform across the globe – it is an endemic social problem and an enduring human rights issue within many societies and cultures (Amnesty International, 2004; Bond and Philips, 2000Effective violence prevention initiatives are imperative, and the authors support those initiatives which challenge attitudes that condone violence both at the individual and community level. This paper brings together findings from two studies which examined children and young people's understandings of men's violence against women. Both studies were conducted with school students in Glasgow, Scotland, using a variety of qualitative methods. This paper reflects on the similarities in the children and young people's views and understandings of men's violence against women despite the studies being conducted with 11 to 12 year olds in primary school and 15 to 18 years olds in secondary schools and with an interval of nearly ten years between the studies. We argue that children and young people's understanding of gender norms, roles and relations are key to understanding their normalisation of men's violence against women. It will be argued that it is this normalisation that is the real barrier to effectively challenging and preventing men's violence against women.

Geographical Context

Scotland is the only country in the UK to define domestic abuse as gender based, thereby locating it within the wider structural context of gender inequality (Scottish Executive, 2000; 2001). In 2012/13 the police in Scotland recorded 60,080 domestic incidents accounting for 15 percent of all violent crime in Scotland. Over the same

period there were 11 domestic abuse related homicides and 313 attempted murders recorded (Scottish Government Statistical Bulletin, 2013).

Glasgow is the largest city in Scotland, and the third largest in the UK, with a population of around 620,000 of which 24% are aged 19 and under. The majority of Glasgow's population are white (94.5% of the population) with the largest minority ethnic group of Asian / Asian British accounting for 3.8%. Glasgow is a city of significant religious diversity with Irish immigration from 17th century onwards providing Glasgow with a large Catholic population and more recently as home to Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs and Jewish communities.

Glasgow is a post-industrial city that has seen a decline of heavy industry and has higher levels of poverty, drug misuse, mortality, reported crime rates, violence and murders than the Scottish (and UK) average, sustaining a reputation as a violent city (Munro, 2010). These associations of heavy industry, poor health, working class solidarity, violence and football have consolidated Glasgow's 'hard man' image. Glasgow does have a higher reported crime rate than Scotland as a whole. The murder rate in Glasgow is 9.4 per million which is the third highest murder rate in Europe, leading some analysts to proclaim it 'the murder capital of western Europe' (UK Peace Index, 2013)

There have, however, been innovative initiatives aiming at tackling Glasgow's culture of violence. The Violence Reduction Strategy is a 15 year joint operation between the Scottish Executive, police, teachers, health professionals and social workers initiated in December 2004. This co-ordinated response aims to dramatically reduce

the prevalence of violent crime in Glasgow using education alongside enforcement, aiming for long term attitudinal change (VRU, 2006). Initially, its focus was upon knife crime and weapon carrying among young men in Glasgow, with the remit later extended to encompass all violent crime across the whole of Scotland. Implicit in this initiative was the recognition that men are twice as likely to be victims of assault than females, with younger men at greater risk than those who are older and younger women at greater risk than older women. This highlights the gendered nature of violence, as well as illuminating the matrix of age and gender. Yet the hyperbole of the 'booze and blades' culture, often predominant in accounts of violence amongst young people in Glasgow, only tells part of the story to the detriment of the more prevalent but 'hidden' violence and abuse that take place within intimate relationships.

Challenging men's violence against women

This paper highlights the continuing resonance of feminism as the central discourse to make sense of men's violence against women (Lombard and Whiting, 2015; Stanley and Humphreys, 2015). At its core, feminism challenges patriarchy in both structural and ideological forms. Feminist theoretical explanations of men's violence have become more nuanced, highlighting the continuum of such violences (Kelly, 1988) but also the patterns of abuse (Hester and Westmarland, 2006) and its impact (Johnson, 1995; Stark, 2007; Hester, 2009; Barter and McCarry, 2013). Within these feminist discourses, education and awareness raising have been identified as key tools in the area of violence prevention work. Indeed, it is through education and awareness raising that the ideology of patriarchy might be challenged and resisted

eventually leading to changes in the structure. According to Smaoun (2000) the aims of education strategies on violence are to increase awareness, change patterns of behaviour and develop the understanding that violence is unacceptable. Although such education models focus upon the prevention of violence against women they should also provide young people with the resources to resist men's power and control, sexism, and gender stereotypes while promoting equality and respectful partnerships.

There has been a number of awareness raising initiatives in Scotland over the past twenty years. In 1998, Glasgow City Council agreed to the Zero Tolerance Trust conducting research in secondary schools to find out about young people's attitudes towards violence against women. Among the 14 – 21 year olds they interviewed, one in two boys and one in three girls thought that there were some circumstances in which it would be okay to hit a woman or force her to have sex (Burton et al., 1998). Thirty-six percent of the young men interviewed revealed that they personally might force a woman to have sex. Such findings demonstrated that not only did these young people hold complacent attitudes towards violence against women but also that such attitudes would inform their future relationships. This research was crucial in convincing opinion that there was a desperate need for education and awareness raising with young people in relation to this issue. As a direct result, Glasgow City Council applied to fund an Educational Resource Worker to work within Glasgow's secondary schools to promote education and awareness around violence against women. The Zero Tolerance campaign adopted an approach of primary prevention to challenge attitudes, values and structures that sustain inequality and men's

violence against women and children. This work was adapted for use in secondary schools in 1999 and a pilot of primary schools began in 2004.

Prevention work and research, often informed by a feminist theoretical framework, has continued, seeking to develop awareness raising and education strategies by evidencing young people's (see Burton et al., 1998; Dublin Women's Aid, 1999; McCarry, 2009, Burman and Cartmel, 2006) and, more recently, children's (Lombard, 2013; 2014) continuing acceptance and expectation of men's violence as characteristic of normative masculinity. This paper will now examine some of the data from two research projects working with children (aged 11 and 12) and young people (aged 15 to 18 years) in Glasgow which explores their views of violence against women.

Primary School Project

Lombard's research took place in 2008 in five primary schools in Glasgow incorporating a cross section of class, religion and ethnic diversity. All of the children were aged 11 and 12. A range of participatory methods were used to engage them in the research process (see Lombard, 2008; 2013) including an exploratory questionnaire with 89 children to provide an opportunity to discover what they already knew about the topic and discover their preliminary attitudes. The children's answers and ideas were then used as the basis for discussion groups. The discussion groups were located around friendship groups, ensuring a safe and trusted environment. There were 22 groups across the five schools incorporating 40 boys and 49 girls. The format enabled them to have a space to explore their own and

others' attitudes more reflexively and to question, agree and challenge the responses of others. Similar to McCarry's project (described below), vignettes (short stories about hypothetical characters in specified circumstances) were used in Lombard's research, to broaden the discussion topics, to include actual examples of violence against women, and to uncover and explore the participant's understandings. The vignettes made reference to in this article are:

1: Claire and Lee have been seeing each other for four months. Claire's favourite outfit is her jeans and pink vest top. Lee has asked Claire not to wear the vest top because he says other boys look at her and he doesn't like it.

2: Lizzy and Dave live in Glasgow. One day Lizzy goes out to the shops and when she comes back Dave asks her why dinner isn't ready. Lizzy says she has been busy and hasn't had chance to make anything. Dave slaps Lizzy across the face and tells her that she shouldn't go to the shops without asking him first.

3: Jamie and Jenny have been together a year. Jamie has just found out that Jenny has been seeing someone else. When he asks her, Jenny denies it at first and then admits she is in love with Roddy. Jamie punches Jenny and gives her a black eye saying that she deserved it.

Secondary School Project

McCarry's project was conducted almost ten years prior to the Lombard's project in 2001-02 across Glasgow within ten different secondary schools. Within each of the schools focus groups were conducted with between three and seven young people; totaling 13 focus groups with two female-only, two-male only and nine mixed gender

composition groups. These 13 groups had 77 participants split between 43 females and 34 males aged between 15 and 18 years old. The ten schools captured a spread of socio-economic backgrounds with a slightly larger proportion of Black and ethnic minority participants that the wider population (Glasgow City Council, 2004).

In addition to a semi-structured interview schedule, a number of vignette scenarios based on real examples were developed and one vignette was used most often in which the boyfriend in a long-term heterosexual couple starts to dictate his girlfriend's clothes and her refusal to comply leads to him hitting her. Vignettes are a well-established method for engendering discussions on sensitive topics in group and one-to-one interviews; as they allow for a distancing between topic and personal experience whilst opening up a space for discussion that facilities the drawing on personal experience (Barter and Renold, 2000). They are also particularly well suited for working with children and young people (McCarry, 2005). The central vignette

> A girl and a boy have been going out together for some time. The boyfriend doesn't like some of his girlfriend's clothes and asks her not to wear them. She carries on wearing them and the boyfriend hits her.

from this research and discussed is reproduced, below.

Findings

To demarcate between the two samples, the primary school participants are referred to as children, girls or boys and the secondary school participants as young people, young women or young men. This paper is organised into three sections: the

construction of men's violence; gender roles and the naturalisation of difference; and the normalisation of men's violence against women. Data from both projects will be referred to in discussion of these three topics.

The Construction of Men's Violence

In both studies, the children and young people explored the concepts of 'domestic violence' and 'domestic abuse'. Both terms were employed as domestic violence has been the common term and is still prevalent in England. The Scottish government utilise the term domestic abuse and the term has become widespread in Scotland (Scottish Executive, 2000; 2001). The children and young people were asked about violence and abuse as it was significant to note how they negotiated both terms. Whilst their understanding of each was multiple and varied, there is a differentiation between the views of the primary sample and the secondary. For the primary, the common denominator amongst them came from the clear demarcation between the terms 'violence' and 'abuse' where many of them correlated violence with physical acts. Violence was described as '*actual violence'* and linked with physicality in terms of hitting, punching, kicking and injury. Abuse was aligned to emotionality and verbal arguments and because of this it was often viewed as being "not as serious". In contrast, the Secondary participants were far more aware that domestic violence and domestic abuse were one in the same and that violence could be both physical *and* emotional. However, it is of note that of the 77 young people only one (male) referred to sexual violence which, given the prevalence of sexual coercion and abuse amongst secondary school pupils is surprising (Barter et al., 2009; Barter, 2014).

Alice (Primary): Violence is hitting and abuse is annoying someone, harassing them and then ending up hitting them.

John (Primary): Domestic abuse is where you get hit all the time just for stupid things.

Simon (Primary): No abuse is where they insult you and violence is when you get hit.

Richard (Secondary): Anything from verbal to physical constitutes as domestic violence.

Claire (Secondary): Violence does not just have to be physical.

Further differences between violence and abuse were identified by the primary school sample in terms of the intensity and prolonged nature of the actions. Violence, in general, was described as a unique physical action such as the (apparent) isolated incident they heard about in each of the vignettes. In contrast, for these children, *abuse* was seen as a series of prolonged and cumulative actions that began with words but could progress into sustained acts of physical attacks. The extracts from the primary school sample below, illustrate an understanding that the violence perpetrated by men and experienced by women is part of an abusive cycle that increases in severity and frequency over time.

Jack: I think the vignettes were talking about violence, but not abuse, they weren't abusive 'cos abuse is further than that. Like more, it's more of I don't like you smack, punch, push down the stairs and then they might break their back and they are paralysed.

Shazia: Because if someone uses physical abuse once, then they're obviously going to do it again.

Daisy: Abuse is a more general term than violence. Like it covers if I was her husband [points to friend] and I was saying horrible things to her and she would start to believe it, so abuse covers that and the violence as well.

Will: And abuse is like swearing at them all the time, making them do stuff, calling them names.

As indicated above in Richard and Claire's responses which are indicative samples, the majority of the s young people did not differentiate between domestic violence and domestic abuse.

Scott (Secondary): Well domestic abuse could be like, it could be violence but it could also be like getting shouted at or slagged or giving threats all the time and violence as well as getting hit all the time.

Scott illustrates this by repeating the phrase "*all the time*" suggesting that domestic abuse is a pattern of repeated behaviour rather than a discrete incident. In a different group, Ian stated that domestic abuse is "*asserting some sort of control*" again suggesting a pattern of behaviour.

These children and young people therefore recognise the range of manifestations of abuse and violence that collectively comprise domestic abuse/domestic violence but even though the primary research was conducted seven years after the secondary research, and the various preventative programmes in Glasgow schools, the children still retain a binary understanding between domestic violence as physical violence with a greater impact and significance and domestic abuse as non-physical and less serious. This raises significant concerns and needs to be linked to recent research with young people by McCarry and colleagues (see Barter et al., 2009) and Stark (2007) and others indicates that emotional violence and controlling behaviour may in fact be the most prevalent form of abuse and may underpin all other forms of physical and sexual abusive behaviour and in itself have significant negative impact.

Gender Roles and the Naturalisation of Difference

Working from a feminist theoretical perspective that prioritises and researches gendered perceptions of violence signifies a need to understand how gender remains a cause and consequence of men's violence within domestic relationships. Men's violence serves the purpose of maintaining a gendered society in which women are routinely and structurally disadvantaged even though arguably, and somewhat ironically, individual men may not in fact benefit from this enforced maintenance of a gendered binary. This gendered analysis facilitates an understanding of why feminists focus on, and challenge, the underpinning rationale for men's violence which is to exert power and control and maintain a gendered understanding of family violencerather than to simply focus on the violence/abuse without context. As Johnson (1995) argues, scholars must be clear whether they are explaining random acts of violence or whether they are exploring the systematic control of one partner (usually female) by the other (usually male) which is how the authors conceptualise domestic violence/abuse (Stark, 2007).

All of the young people in the secondary school sample were aware of the external influences, including the media, in perpetuating feminine and masculine gender norms:

Claire:	Cos if you look at cartoons and children's programmes and stuff these things are all made really big so that you notice them. They are emphasised in like cartoons and stuff. Girls have huge big eyes and long blond hair, and lots of make-up. And pretty things.
Diane:	Girls are all really pretty.
Claire:	Boys are all rolling in the mud. [laughter]

The children at primary school associated dichotomous gender identities with adults more than among their own age group and very much linked them to biological differences:

John: They're different
Tommy: He means downstairs
[Laughter]
John: He told me to say it
Nancy: Okay, why [does] that matter?
Tommy: Cos it's better having, you know being a boy
Simon: It's what makes you a boy
Tommy: It's what means you're not a girl

However, the majority of young people offered examples of challenges to, or subversion of, these norms by friends and, occasionally, by themselves. All of the young women discussed the segregation of school sports and the extract below illustrates how the gender segregation becomes more entrenched as they progress through secondary school:

Emma: I don't think we should feel comfortable that we get split up for PE, girls and boys. But ok some girls get embarrassed and stuff. But I don't think it should be like that but that's the way it is.
Anna: That's the way its been cos see in primary school we used to play, guys and girls, and we used to go swimming with guys but now we don't. But obviously when we get older but, I don't know how I would feel about it, I wouldn't mind.

It is interesting that these young people reflect that this segregation was not as fixed when they were in primary school although these memories of primary school were not always shared by the current children there:

Shona: Sometimes when boys are playing football and you ask to join in, they say no cos you're a girl.
Nancy: And what do you think of that?
Shona: Well I don't think it's really fair cos we let them join in with our games, so why shouldn't they let us join in?

Despite the girls arguing that there should not be segregation in school sports, the realities in both primary and secondary, as suggested in the next two extracts, show how powerful this model is with girls' participation in football being explicitly rejected and mocked:

Secondary School

Melanie: Do you play football together?
Fiona: There is only one lassie that plays football with the boys.
Melanie: Why is that?
Cameron: It shouldn't be allowed.
Melanie: It shouldn't be allowed, why do you think that?
Cameron: They should play with lassies but they shouldn't play with the boys. Cos for boys it's a men's game.
Fiona: Aye but some lassies like football.
Cameron: Cos lassies play their own games and boys play their own games together. Let boys play together and let lassies play their own games together. … The only time you would play with a lassie is if you were taking her for a date or something [laughter].

Primary School

Samia: I mean you feel a bit uncomfortable with the boys around cos if its just us girls, you just do it, but if the boys are there, they start laughing

Grace: They say you are doing it wrong, that you can't do it. You feel ashamed to do it. They just start laughing so you feel uncomfortable to do PE or sports activities and stuff.

In general, the young people have quite disordered views about challenging the gender binary even though many of them suggest this might be something they would want to do. For example, Leigh (secondary) points out the over simplification of the reductive gender binary model: "*everyone is so different and you can't just say that men are aggressive and women are emotional cos that's not the case and it is often the other way around*." This also seems to be shared by her peer, Ian, who

argues: "*Even now you get this new breed of women who are just like lads. The breaking down of the gender identities*."

Whilst Ian is supportive of Leigh's view and argues that there are few differences between women and men, he still maintains the male as the norm with the dismantling of the gender binary only possible through women *becoming more like men*. However, the overriding opinion of the young people, or at least what the young people perceive the dominant opinion to be, is that men and women are different and not equal: "*Yeh, cos a wife is seen as a man's property*" (Olivia).

Despite these comments seemingly naturalising the differences between women and men, many of the young people did reflect on their lived realities and how many of them wanted to challenge the gendered parameters which curtailed them. Several of the boys at the primary school maintained that if they were girls they would '*fight for equality'* demonstrating awareness that there is a fight to be fought yet that it is a struggle for women alone.

In both studies it is clear that children and young people are aware of how differences are naturalised and that 'acceptable' masculine and feminine roles are not always representative of their own lives. However, the policing of gender roles (by their peers, families and wider society including the media) means that these young people find it harder to both access and embrace alternative identities.

> James (Primary): If you don't act how you're meant to then people laugh. You don't have friends if you're different.

When comparing these two research samples, the author's found perceptions of gender differences as naturalised (through the embodiment of gender difference) became stronger and more polarised as the children became young people.

Normalisation of Men's Violence Against Women

One of the central tenets of this article, and what brought the authors together, was the identification of the continuing normalisation by children and young people of men's violence towards their female partners. This normalisation was evident with both the primary and secondary participants. What was also striking was that in the intervening period between the two studies, there have been various public awareness raising campaigns, social media campaigns and secondary school interventions challenging this acceptability of men's violence. Based on our combined data, we would strongly argue that the focus of such interventions should begin at primary school as, even at this young age, children appear to normalise, have an expectation and an acceptance of men's violence against women.

A further interesting aspect of the research was how the primary school children differentiated between real and unreal violence (see also Lombard, 2013). Unreal violence signified the proximity of the children to the violence, in terms of temporality (it happened among children, peers and siblings), spatially (in locations close to them), but not always between the same gender. Violence that was labelled 'unreal' represented the actions that the children were most likely to normalise. They called this '*dummy fighting*', '*pretend'* and '*unreal'*. Girls from all of the primary schools relayed similar accounts:

Sarah: I mean [boy in class] is always doing it. And I tell the teacher and she thinks I am telling tales. But it hurts. He really hurts me.

Claire: He gives me chinese burns. I don't like it, it's really sore. When I tell my mum, she says he does it because he likes me.

Rachel: I just wish he'd stop. But he never gets told off, so he just keeps on doing it.

Hayley: Like boys always say to the teacher it's a 'kid on', but they are doing it for real.

All of these actions took place among their peers and siblings in their own spaces: playgrounds, homes and community streets. In the actions described, the acts were not labelled or condemned by adults or those in authority as 'violence'. Children (and adults) use their experiential knowledge to make sense of their lives (Brannen, 2005). Yet the girls often found that their own experiences of violent (male) peers was invalidated by the lack of adult recognition (and definition) of the actions. This lack of validation resulted in the children in the primary schools accepting and minimising their own roles of perpetration and victimisation. Arguably, this leads to the child's own minimisation of such actions and an acceptance that it formed part of their everyday lives. Kitzinger (1994) argued that the increasing visibility of men's violence affects society's understanding of the prevalence of gendered violence by normalising rather than problematizing it. As such, society begins to normalise abusive actions as part of everyday gendered interactions between men and women (Dobash and Dobash, 1979, 1992; Kelly, 1988)

When presented with the vignettes, as described above, over three quarters of the primary sample sought to find reasons for the victim being victimised, which began with an analysis of what they had done wrong rather than finding fault with the perpetrator.

There were contradictory examples where individual children would argue fervently against the violence perpetrated in one of the vignettes, but then thought it was wholly justified in another. The reason for this change in perspective seems to be dependent upon the actions of the female (situated as the victim) and not the male abuser - feeding into the discourse of 'deserving' and 'undeserving' victim. For example, in response to the second vignette, Kirsten vehemently rejected Dave's violent actions: "Totally wrong. He has no right to go and slap her." She frames her argument in terms of a rejection of Dave's entitlement. Yet when responding to the third vignette, Kirsten firmly places the reason for the violence with Jenny: "It serves her right. Jamie must have done lots of things for her and she… she goes with another guy. That's wrong, so she deserves it".

Whereas Kirsten's initial argument was based upon Dave not being entitled to slap Lizzie, we can now analyse it in terms of Kirsten not believing that Dave was justified in doing so. Kirsten sees his anger that tea was not ready, and his expectation that it should be so, as unreasonable, and therefore his actions are wrong. However, in another instance, Kirsten views the fact that Jenny is having an affair as wrong, and judges Jamie's violent action as justified, because Jenny has not acted in an acceptable way. Thus, in this sense the violent reactions of both men are viewed as chastisements, as *reactions* to their partners' actions. It is only because Kirsten does not view Lizzie's action as in need of chastisement, that the violence is judged as wrong, not that the violence in itself is wrong. The fact that men themselves are not judged, or their belief in chastisement is not questioned, demonstrates an acceptance and normalisation of both their power and their active use of it. Indeed this was clearly demonstrated by Meera: "In order to teach them [Jenny and women in general] a lesson you have to hit them".

Through advocating violence as a means to teach women right from wrong, Meera deems that men have an entitlement to subordinate and abuse women. She is also further implicating herself within this subordinate group, by siding with the oppressor rather than challenging or resisting this violence. In many instances there was little, or no, discussion of Jamie's violence other than as a reaction to Jenny's infidelity. Thus, the violence here was judged in the context of Jenny deserving this 'reaction' and not looking at the violence in terms of Jamie's behaviour.

Craig: Well she's been cheating on him so she deserves it.
Daniel: Yeah, she deserves it.
Nancy: Okay, so what does everyone else think?
Rachel: He should have pushed her, not hit her.

In this group, the children agree that Jamie punching Jenny was a justified reaction in chastising her for her behaviour, but not all agreed with his chosen 'method' of doing so. Even though Jamie punched Jenny, the majority of children saw Jamie as the victim because Jenny had had an affair. Everyone agreed that Jenny was wrong to have an affair. Many more of the children agreed that Jenny deserved to be punched by Jamie; it was her behaviour that had *provoked* him and therefore he was the victim and was justified in his reaction. Whilst not everybody agreed that Jamie was right to punch Jenny, his behaviour was framed within an empathic understanding of his anger and betrayal. So although Jenny was seen as the 'abuser', it was not a powerful position; instead she was framed as 'manipulative'. Consequently, the aggression demonstrated by Jamie proved that he was not a weak victim: "'Cos if they've done something you would hit them rather than doing nothing" (Craig).

This analysis is reflected in the views of some of the secondary sample as previously discussed by McCarry (2009; 2010; 2014). McCarry has written about a reaction from one of the young men to a similar vignette (see above) in which a boyfriend does not like his girlfriend's clothing and over time repeatedly objects to her choices whereby the outcome is that the boyfriend hits his girlfriend. Richard and Leigh respond that:

> Richard: She [the girlfriend] knows that he [the boyfriend] doesn't like it [her clothes] so she knows that it is going to get on his nerves therefore if he hits her, then okay it is not right, but she has provoked him and if it has been going on for a while then his emotional endurance is just worn right down. Now that guy can either, he has two options, he can either go straight for the door and leave the room or breaking something material depending on how much she has worn him down through annoying him wearing whatever she is wearing is going to determine the outcome…
>
> Leigh: No, cos you could walk out or go for a walk or something. Or just leave her because obviously she didn't really care enough about him. But I think there is no excuse to hit a woman…

It is interesting that like the primary children, Richard and Leigh comment on the boyfriend's response but not the idea that a boyfriend is entitled to comment on his partners clothing. Both Richard's analysis that the girlfriend was provoking the violence through her choice of clothing and Leigh's analysis that not changing her appearance was an indication of not caring enough are highly gendered. Leigh does reflect that perhaps physical violence is not the most appropriate response but does not comment on the normalisation of the male control in that relationship. However, further in this dialogue Jane and Kay reflect on the gendered dynamics of this exchange but then Kay still returns to the normalisation and justification of why the boyfriend needs to be in control:

Jane: I think that it would be less likely for a woman to say to her boyfriend 'I don't really like that'. It's more for the males who seem to have more of a control over the woman. I know that sounds really stereotypical but it's more often the case that it would be the man saying 'oh your skirt is too short' or 'your top is too low' rather than a women turning round and saying 'oh your jeans are too tight' or something like that…

Kay: I think sometimes that guys can be a bit scared cos if they are going out with their girlfriend and she is good looking or something then he might lose her or something. So he has got to be in control of it so he won't lose the person or someone will take her away or something like that.

Overall, both the primary and secondary students were cognisant of the way that men's violence against women is normalised and that it is only problematic when the violence is directed at an underserving victim or was disproportionate to the perceived transgression that generated it. Arguably, one of the great successes of the public anti-violence awareness campaigns is the recognition that physical violence is not acceptable in a relationship; however, until we challenge the gender binary that is intrinsically enmeshed within a heterosexual paradigm which also serves to perpetuate the gender binary it is doubtful that the normalisation, and related justifications of men's violence against women partners, will be effectively tackled. Consequently, it is crucial to look at how heterosexuality regulates young people in ways that inform their constructions of gender and impacts upon their understanding of men's violence against women. Regardless of whether the young people in these research projects will identify with a heterosexual identity, an engagement with the ideology of heteronormativity (Rich, 1980) is relevant to understand young people's interactions with gendered norms and practices and how these locate them within certain (hetero) sexual spheres.

This follows on from earlier perceptions by both boys and girls, that boys/men (rather than girls/women) are more likely to use violence to save face, and because of pride, linking to constructions of hegemonic masculinity (Connell, 1995). This can be positioned next to a need to be *seen* to act as well as a desire to act, thereby constructing masculinity as a performance judged in terms of how others view it. One group of primary boys talked of what they would do if they were in the same situation as Jamie in the third vignette. As highlighted below, several of the boys struggled under the pressure of their peers to agree with them that Jenny deserved to be punched because she had had an affair:

John:	She did deserve it, but she shouldn't have got hit because it's a guy who hit her. If it was a woman then…
Simon:	She did deserve it but she shouldnae of got hit
Nancy:	So why do you think she deserved it?
Simon:	Don't know
Jason:	You're daft
John:	'Cos she went with that other guy [Shouting]
Nancy:	Everyone is entitled to their own opinions, so let's not be calling each other
Jason:	[to the group] So what would you do if you had a girlfriend who was going out with someone else and you didn't know until she told you?
Simon:	I wouldn't care
John:	I'd dump her
Chris:	Pack your bags
Jason:	Pack her bags you mean [Laughter] You're stupid!

The discussions in this group became animated and aggressive because of the opposing ways the boys talked about how they would deal with the situation that Jamie found himself in. There was disagreement between those who felt Jamie had been treated badly, but that violence was the wrong reaction; those who said they felt justified in punching Jenny (as Jamie did) and those who felt it would be more gender-matched to get another girl to hit her for you. Those who hadn't initially

agreed with the more aggressive suggestions were called names and it was implied that their beliefs were less valid, or 'softer' options. John became aggressive, raising his voice and getting angry when the others in the group didn't agree with him. John and Jason colluded in their anger and united against the other members of the group. Jason felt so aggrieved that the others did not share his opinion (that Jenny deserved to be punched), that he rephrased the question convinced that it had not been understood. He believed that once he had done this, they would arrive at the same conclusion which indeed they did. The boys, who had previously disagreed with him, succumbed to Jason's opinion, dismissing Jenny and their original positions siding instead with Jason's dominant hegemonic position.

In the primary school sample, the process of 'blaming the victim' and thereby justifying violence, had much to do with the sexualisation of the female body. Several of the girls and boys invested in this discourse of gendered morality when discussing the first vignette regarding Leigh telling Claire not to wear her favourite vest top. Locating the issue with Claire subscribes to the notion that women are defined by how men view them with clothing becoming sexualised and encoded with the means of pleasing or displeasing men. This resonates with the response offered by the secondary young people in relation to the boyfriend's violence in response to his dislike of his girlfriend's clothes. In the vignettes, clothing is linked with attractiveness but also as evidenced by the primary and the secondary study, compliance in terms of allowing men to define her choices. Whilst worrying, this outcome cannot be surprising given the almost universal promotion of a heteronormative construction of both heterosexuality and dichotomous gender roles. Young people understand that whilst we do not all fit into the binary framework we should all try to do so. If we do not, if the girlfriend does not accept the

boyfriend's decisions, then she must face the consequences of his anger. This individualisation of the abuse and control exerted by men against their partners is then also normalised at an individual level which sanctions it at a societal level.

Conclusion

The two studies took place almost ten years apart with two different age groups, 11 and 12 year olds and 15 to 18 year olds in Glasgow over a period when specific preventative education programmes were introduced in schools. The most alarming finding is that although more awareness raising and education work has taken place in this intervening period very little has changed in young people's perceptions of gendered justifications for violence. This is both in respect to children and young people's understandings of violence but also more crucially in relation to their attitudes to gender (in)equality.

Both studies were carried out in Glasgow, Scotland and the introduction contextualises the city as having a history and reputation for violence. However, it is important to stress, given global prevalence levels of domestic violence/abuse and young people relationships, these findings are not simply a product of a Glaswegian upbringing. It is also useful to highlight that Scotland, in having a gendered definition of domestic abuse, draws attention to the role of gender inequality in both its perpetration and prevalence. Nevertheless, it would be useful to replicate these studies in other cities in the UK, and beyond, to explore whether our results would be reproduced in other geographical locations.

What these studies highlight once again is the enormity of the task facing communities that seek to halt gendered violence. Through education and interventions, projects can explain that domestic abuse is wrong and children and young people will agree to an extent but further work is required to examine the complexities and dynamics of men's violence against women. As long as a society constructs differences between women and men, girls and boys as natural there is a foundation that enables the normalisation and justification of certain forms of violence.

While the development and implementation of domestic violence education programmes need to take into account the gender differences, targeting only boys' attitudes would fail to acknowledge an important component in reducing domestic violence – the internalisation of patriarchal norms by girls and women as well as boys and men.

More importantly all education programmes and awareness training should be underpinned by solid understandings of gender and the need to understand gender (in)equality. Currently, in Glasgow, organisations are given an hour or two to deliver a complex programme to school pupils often to tick a box for equality training or PSE (personal and social education) requirements. This is not only inadequate in terms of the brief time allocated but this research indicates the focus of current provisions are piecemeal. More importantly all education programmes and awareness training should be underpinned by solid understandings of gender and the need to understand gender (in)equality. It is hoped that with the post 2010 Curriculum for Excellence (Scotland's national curriculum for those aged 3 to 18) and Glasgow City Council's Sexual Health

and Relationship Education which embeds gender equality, domestic abuse awareness and healthy relationships into its ongoing programme for 5 to 18 year olds, attitudes such as these are not replicated in another ten years' time and that we can, in fact, start to tell a different story.

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